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PERIODIC REPORT ON EVALUATION

Report of the Executive Director

SUMMARY

This document has been prepared in response to Governing Council decision 82/20 I, paragraph 8, and decision 88/34 I, paragraph 7, which requested the Executive Director to supply further evaluation reports periodically. Part I discusses the evaluation activities of UNFPA in 1990-1991, including project evaluations, independent, in-depth evaluations, programme review and strategy development, and feedback and use of evaluation results. Part II summarizes the results of the independent, in-depth evaluations and selected project evaluations as well as Programme Review and Strategy Development (PRSD) exercises undertaken in 1990-1991.

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INTRODUCTION

1. This report on evaluation activities in 1990 and 1991 has been prepared in response to Governing Council decision 82/20 I, paragraph 8, and decision 88/34 I, paragraph 7, which requested the Executive Director to supply further evaluation reports periodically. The last such report was submitted to the Council at its thirty-seventh session in 1990 through document DP/1990/49. The Council, noting the report with satisfaction, recognized the usefulness of evaluation activities as both a management and information tool; welcomed the introduction and expanded use of the Programme Review and Strategy Development (PRSD) exercise; encouraged expanded development and use of UNFPA's Lessons Learned Database; and requested the Fund to distribute copies of evaluation reports to interested parties and to continue to make biennial reports on evaluation to the Council (decision 90/35 A, para. 14).

2. During the period 1990-1991, UNFPA expanded the use of the PRSD exercise as a mechanism to help countries develop coherent frameworks for national population programmes. The Fund also conducted most of the independent in-depth intercountry programme evaluations foreseen in document DP/1990/49 as well as a considerable number of project evaluations. Furthermore, the Lessons Learned Database continued to be expanded with the coding and introduction of new lessons from both programme and project evaluations. Finally, after nearly four years of testing, the Fund's revised guidelines for monitoring and evaluation were finalized and distributed. Part I of this report discusses these various activities, while part II provides a summary of the results of evaluations conducted by UNFPA, including in-depth intercountry programme evaluations, selected country programme evaluations conducted in connection with PRSD exercises, as well as some project evaluations.

3. While in the past evaluation activities carried out by the Fund were by and large organized and conducted by the Evaluation Branch, over the past few years, the responsibility for country programme and individual project evaluations has shifted to other entities within and outside the Fund, including UNFPA's geographical divisions, its field offices, as well as project management and executing agencies, among others. The shift first came as part of the Fund's efforts to place increased emphasis on monitoring and evaluation as an integral component of its programming process. The Governing Council welcomed this increased emphasis, "in particular the shift in the focus of independent, in-depth evaluations from individual projects to country and intercountry programmes and to technical areas and issues in a global comparative perspective" (decision 88/34 A, para. 7). The introduction in 1989 of the PRSD exercise, combining needs assessment, country programme evaluation and strategy development, brought about a further shift in the focus of UNFPA country programme evaluations, which were thereafter to be carried out as an integral part of the PRSD exercise rather than as a separate undertaking. A major aim of such developments was to ensure not only that evaluation would be taken into account in all phases of the programme cycle, but also that evaluation results would be fed directly into programme formulation.

4. As a result of these developments and given the multiplicity of actors involved, the number of evaluations carried out by the Fund have considerably increased over the past few years. Such evaluations range in scope from self-evaluations conducted by project management to large-scale evaluations carried out by a team of independent experts; they also range in the depth and intensity of analysis, depending on the circumstances of each case.

5. With a view to providing as comprehensive an overview as possible of the evaluation activities carried out by the Fund, this report examines project evaluations, intercountry programme evaluations, thematic evaluations and the results of PRSD exercises in terms of their evaluation component, in addition to the usual

sections on feedback and use of evaluation results and on monitoring and evaluation guidelines. In view of the magnitude of evaluation activities conducted during the period under review, a selection had to be made among the many project evaluations and numerous country programmes evaluated as part of PRSD exercises.

I. EVALUATION ACTIVITIES

A. Project evaluations

6. The number of projects evaluated as part of regular project activities increased sharply during the period under review. For example, in 1988 and 1989, approximately 100 projects had a separate budget line for evaluation activities; in 1990 and 1991, the combined figure was about 230. As noted in the last periodic report on evaluation activities, such an increase is due mainly to the fact that all major projects now have built-in evaluation mechanisms. Indeed, the Fund's Guidelines for Project Formulation and Appraisal require that all projects contain a monitoring and evaluation component and that the use of evaluation results is discussed during project and programme approval. The sharp increase in evaluations also reflects the demonstrated usefulness of such evaluations in identifying and addressing problems in project implementation. UNFPA has further strengthened the requirements that evaluation be taken into account in all phases of the programming cycle.

7. Because the reports on the results of project evaluations are prepared in the field and are not always transmitted to UNFPA headquarters, the Fund does not have exact statistics on the number and types of evaluations undertaken in 1990-1991 or access to all their results. Although such shortcomings persist, concerted efforts are being made through requests at various UNFPA fora and to field offices to ensure that more project evaluation reports are sent to UNFPA headquarters for review and inclusion in the Lessons Learned Database.

8. The quality of the evaluations, however, has not always kept pace with the increase in quantity, especially those initiated and conducted by field offices and project management that have not received adequate guidance. For this reason, UNFPA will continue efforts to familiarize all field and project staff with evaluation methodology and procedures. The recently finalized guidelines for monitoring and evaluation are particularly useful in this regard since they include generic terms of reference on how to conduct evaluations as well as specific instructions on what issues to address. Such efforts, coupled with expanded staff training, should help improve the quality of project evaluations.

B. Independent, in-depth evaluations

9. In accordance with the biennial work programme for independent, in-depth evaluations, UNFPA evaluated a series of regional and interregional programmes executed by United Nations specialized agencies, including those executed by the United Nations Department of Technical Co-operation for Development (UNDTCD), the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the World Health Organization/Western Pacific Regional Office (WHO/WPRO), and the WHO/South Eastern Asia Regional Office (SEARO). The Fund's Global Programme of Training in Population and Development was also evaluated during the period under review.

10. Follow-up activities to earlier thematic evaluations were carried out in connection with the study of family planning and services for newly-weds, the diagnostic exercises of maternal and child health and family planning (MCH/FP) management information systems (MIS), an evaluation of family planning logistics systems

in 18 African countries, and the comparative evaluation on population and development planning, the results of which were reported in the last periodic report to the Council (DP/1990/49). The Fund disseminated the results of the study on newly-weds to UNFPA field and headquarters staff; prepared a report on the findings and recommendations of the diagnostic survey of MIS for MCH/FP and family planning logistics systems; and drafted a programme advisory note (PAN) on the comparative evaluation on population and development planning, which will, among other things, be discussed in UNFPA-organized regional seminars on this topic scheduled for 1992. The seminars will examine ways and means to implement the evaluation recommendations at the regional level, when and as appropriate.

C. Programme Review and Strategy Development (PRSD)

11. In 1990 and 1991, UNFPA sought to strengthen and expand the use of the PRSD exercise in the programming cycle. To this end, draft PRSD guidelines prepared in 1989 were revised and finalized in light of the experience acquired over the past three years. In order to ensure that the evaluation component in the PRSD exercise is adequately covered, PRSD reports are to include an assessment not only of the design and performance of the country programme but, most important, the extent to which the programme has achieved its immediate objectives and progressed towards its long-range objectives, as stated in the country programme approved by the Governing Council. The PRSD evaluation is also to identify the discrepancies, if any, between what was planned and what was achieved as well as the factors facilitating or hindering the achievement of programme objectives. It should also suggest options for improving the likelihood that such objectives will be achieved in the future.

12. In line with the emphasis on the expanded use of the PRSD in programming, in 1990, UNFPA undertook PRSD missions to 19 countries -- 7 in Africa (Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Congo, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger and Sierra Leone); 3 in Arab States and Europe (Albania, Morocco and Tunisia); 5 in Asia and the Pacific (Bangladesh, India, Malaysia, Sri Lanka and Viet Nam); and 4 in Latin America and the Caribbean (Bolivia, Dominican Republic, English-speaking Caribbean countries, and Honduras). In 1991, 28 such missions were undertaken of which 16 were in Africa (Benin, Botswana, Burundi, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Gabon, Gambia, Guinea, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, Nigeria, Senegal, Swaziland and United Republic of Tanzania); 5 in Asia and the Pacific (Laos People's Democratic Republic, Nepal, Pakistan, the South Pacific subregion and Thailand); 4 in Arab States and Europe (Egypt, Jordan, Sudan and Yemen); and 3 in Latin America and the Caribbean (Brazil, Paraguay and Peru).

13. The quality of the PRSD reports to date has been somewhat uneven, both in content and depth of analysis. This is particularly true of the coverage of the evaluation component, which has not always been adequate. This unevenness in quality has been due in large part to a general unfamiliarity not only with the PRSD guidelines but also with the PRSD concept itself. As staff and consultants gain more experience in the PRSD exercise and familiarize themselves with the recently finalized guidelines, the quality of the PRSD reports will improve.

D. Feedback and use of evaluation results

14. As noted in previous reports to the Council on evaluation activities, the UNFPA Programme Committee and Project Review Committee, when reviewing new programme and project proposals, require that such proposals document the use of evaluation results in their preparation. Furthermore, the Project Review Committee also reviews ongoing projects to assess progress, identify problems and recommend remedial action, if needed. In connection with the preparation of the interregional and the regional

programmes that make up the Fund's intercountry programme for the cycle 1992-1996, UNFPA prepared a report summarizing the main findings and conclusions of the various intercountry programme evaluations as an input into the appraisal process for such programmes. Finally, the results of the various PRSD exercises undertaken during the past two years have been used in the preparation of nearly all the country programmes that were submitted to the Council in 1991 or are being submitted in 1992.

15. Efforts to expand the Lessons Learned Database continued during the past two years with the coding and addition of new lessons from both project and programme evaluation reports. At the same time, UNFPA explored the feasibility of further expanding the database by including lessons learned from sources other than UNFPA evaluation reports. This is now possible because the computer hardware has been expanded, making the database accessible to the staff at large through the Fund headquarters local area computer network. Nevertheless, UNFPA will still continue to disseminate evaluation results by distributing print-outs of the lessons learned from evaluations and by making use of such other mechanisms as newsletters and training seminars, particularly for the benefit of field staff.

E. Monitoring and evaluation guidelines

16. The UNFPA guidelines for monitoring and evaluation of UNFPA-supported projects and programmes have been finalized and distributed. In an effort to familiarize the staff with the guidelines and to ensure their proper use, UNFPA organized training sessions in 1990 and 1991 as part of its annual training and orientation workshop for field staff. The Fund also initiated preparations in 1991 to produce a training module on monitoring and evaluation. The focus of the module will be on the key essentials of programme implementation, monitoring and evaluation as well as the respective responsibilities of field offices and the headquarters with regard to monitoring and evaluation activities. One of the objectives of the module would be to train headquarters and field staff and government personnel to serve as potential trainers.

F. Future plans

17. With the new cycle of the intercountry programme slated to start in January 1992, the focus of independent, in-depth evaluations over the next two years will be on comparative and thematic evaluations. In the area of MCH/FP, possible topics for study include local production of contraceptives, quality of services, outreach programmes for adolescents and young mothers, and community-based delivery of family planning services. The evaluation of contraceptive production is a follow-up to a 1991 UNFPA-sponsored study on contraceptive requirements. The study surveyed the current status of local production in 16 developing countries and recommended that UNFPA consider follow-up evaluation of selected projects that had been in place for three years or more. The proposed evaluation will focus on such issues as production constraints, the need to provide technical and institutional support to develop independent quality assurance capabilities and the appropriateness of collaboration with multilateral and bilateral agencies to facilitate local production.

18. The evaluation of the quality of services will assess the quality and range of care provided in selected UNFPA-funded projects. Critical elements to be addressed include choice of methods; type of information given to clients and the mode used to convey it; technical competence of service providers; use and effectiveness of interpersonal communications; effectiveness of mechanisms to ensure appropriate follow-up and continuity; and the appropriateness and acceptability of services. The evaluation of outreach programmes for youth will assess the effectiveness of the educational and service delivery components of selected projects aimed at decreasing the incidence of teen-age pregnancy and developing a more responsible attitude towards sexual behaviour among youth. The proposed evaluation of the community-based delivery of family planning

services will seek to identify some of the main lessons learned from UNFPA support to projects in this field. Issues to be addressed include the effectiveness of such projects to meet the demand for contraceptives in the target areas, the technical competence of personnel and the appropriateness of training, the linkage between community-based family planning programmes and information, education and communication (IEC) activities, and the effectiveness of mechanisms to provide technical support.

19. In the IEC sector, UNFPA plans to assess the impact of IEC components in support of MCH/FP projects. The evaluation will address the linkages between such components and the concerned MCH/FP projects, the extent to which other line ministries are involved in IEC activities and the institutional arrangements in place to provide technical backstopping. With regard to the women, population and development sector, UNFPA will conduct an evaluation of income-generating activities for women. In addition to reviewing the performance of the projects in terms of meeting their objectives and identifying factors accounting for success or failure, the evaluation will also assess how such activities interrelate with other population activities and what impact they have on fertility. The Fund also plans to evaluate the training in management of population programmes executed by NGOs as well as the performance of the Program for the Introduction and Adaptation of Contraceptive Technology (PIACT) as executing agency for UNFPA-funded projects.

20. As follow-up to earlier evaluation activities, UNFPA will, as noted above, finalize the draft programme advisory note on population and development and use it in regional seminars. The seminars will serve as a forum to discuss and disseminate the findings of the Fund's comparative evaluation on population and development as well as seek ways and means to implement region-specific recommendations. The Fund will also prepare a report on its evaluation of UNDTCD-executed projects, synthesising the evaluation findings in the three regions visited (Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean).

21. The Lessons Learned Database will be further expanded as lessons from evaluations and PRSD exercises are coded and entered. More important, as part of its efforts to promote further utilization of evaluation results, UNFPA will conduct an in-depth analysis of the lessons in the database with a view to providing the UNFPA staff with more concise reports on the different issues identified in various evaluations.

22. UNFPA plans to conduct 21 PRSD missions in 1992, including 12 in Africa, 2 in Asia and the Pacific, 3 in the Arab States and Europe and 4 in Latin America and the Caribbean. The findings and recommendations will be used in formulating the country programmes that will be submitted to the Governing Council in 1993.

II. RESULTS OF EVALUATION ACTIVITIES

A. Independent, in-depth evaluations

23. With the exception of the evaluation of the Global Training Programme in Population and Development, which does not deal with technical advisory services, one general finding of the intercountry programme evaluations presented below is that the effectiveness of long-distance backstopping is limited in terms of both technical and administrative support. The main reasons for this include, inter alia, the sheer number of countries and projects to be covered, insufficient technical advisory staff, and the enormous distances that are often involved and the resulting communication and logistical problems. The results of these evaluations, a summary of which follows, were used in the preparation of the interregional and regional programmes of the Fund's intercountry programme for 1992-1996.

ESCAP regional population programme (Mission February 1990)

24. The evaluation mission took note of the important contributions the ESCAP secretariat had made in enhancing member countries' awareness of the fundamental role played by population factors in the development process. It observed that advisory services provided through the ESCAP regional population programme had succeeded in creating awareness of the importance of a sound knowledge of population issues in development planning as well as in population policy formulation. The mission also noted other important achievements of the ESCAP programme, including the establishment of 13 national population centres, the development of an information database and the promotion of activities making use of technical cooperation among developing countries (TCDC).

25. The mission also identified a number of factors that had constrained the performance of the ESCAP regional population programme. It observed, for example, that the ESCAP population programme consisted of a series of projects, some of which were inadequately interlinked and most of which were funded from extrabudgetary resources. The mission identified one of the factors contributing to this situation as the compartmentalized structure of the ESCAP secretariat. Adding to this was the fact that the structure and early functions and activities of ESCAP's Population Division, which were primarily aimed at improving data collection and analysis and monitoring demographic trends, had remained essentially unchanged, even though programming needs and emphases had changed. Moreover, subsequent reviews had not been able to satisfactorily redefine the Division's role and functions in line with emerging needs.

26. The mission found that the level of collaboration both within ESCAP and between ESCAP and various agencies had been rather limited. It observed that the staffs of ESCAP and of the regional offices of specialized agencies rarely met to exchange information and discuss ways to improve collaboration.

27. Despite recent additional support by UNFPA to strengthen regional advisory services, the evaluation mission found that advisers had not been able to meet the considerable demand that exists for such services. There was thus a need to strengthen and prioritize advisory services. At the same time, the mission recommended that ESCAP develop a typology for countries in the region according to the stage they were at in collecting and analysing data, in integrating population factors into development planning and in formulating a population policy, among others. Such a typology could be used for planning, monitoring and evaluation. Commenting on the future role of ESCAP, the mission suggested that it could most appropriately serve as a repository of knowledge for the region, supporting the formulation, elaboration and implementation of service programmes, primarily at the country level.

ECA regional programme (Mission June-July 1990)

28. The mission noted that over the years an impressive amount of work had been undertaken under the ECA regional programme in such areas as training, research, information dissemination and technical backstopping. However, in the absence of an overall framework specifying targets and quantifiable measures of achievements, the mission found it difficult to assess precisely the contribution and impact of the activities concerned. Nevertheless, on the basis of its field visits, the mission concluded that the programme had played an important role in creating awareness of population issues among African countries and in enhancing national capabilities in the area of data collection and analysis and, to a limited extent, in integrating population factors into development planning and in formulating and implementing population policies.

29. The institutions that had made use of ECA population services were in general satisfied with the quality of the backstopping provided to them. Some expressed concern, however, about the short duration, timeliness and frequency of technical assistance missions, particularly those related to training. Furthermore, the mission observed that outside of certain technical governmental agencies, ECA population activities were generally not known to the majority of institutions in the countries visited, including those involved in population-related activities such as ministries of health, agriculture, and women's affairs.

30. From these observations and from the analysis of ECA documents and a review of recent developments, the mission concluded that the ECA's commitment to population issues was in need of strengthening. For example, ECA's Population Division had been downgraded when its sections were abolished in 1988, making it the only substantive division in the ECA which has no sections.

31. The mission observed that the criteria used to select countries for backstopping were based primarily on requests coming from the countries themselves and did not take into account either the priority of needs or the availability of local expertise. This often resulted in countries with the strongest local expertise benefiting the most from backstopping missions. The mission further noted that there were not enough regional advisers at ECA to cover the countries involved. It called for strategies to strengthen advisory services through, inter alia, the establishment of decentralized multi-disciplinary teams located at appropriate places and the use of available local expertise.

Global Training Programme in Population and Development (Mission April-May 1990)

32. The mission found that the Global Programme was achieving its immediate objective of promoting a better understanding of the linkage between economic processes and population dynamics. It noted that while the courses delivered had been of relatively high academic standards, there was a need for greater emphasis on problem solving. Given the importance of computer software and simulation games as training tools and in view of the inadequacy of existing software, the mission recommended that a task force be established to produce appropriate software.

33. The Global Programme has attracted highly qualified middle-level personnel from many developing countries. However, the number of people trained is inadequate in relation to the needs of these countries. Trainees were found to be so thinly spread across many countries and institutions that they could have little impact on the development planning process of their countries in the immediate future. The mission therefore emphasized the need to train more people and proposed various strategies for doing so. These included, among others, mounting similar training courses in a number of developing countries, integrating population and development courses in all UNFPA-supported demographic training programmes, and increasing the number of fellowships to the Global Programme. Moreover, with a view to facilitating the eventual transfer of the current training programmes to developing countries, the mission called for the expansion and strengthening of the links between the Global Programme and institutions in the developing countries. In view of the fact that the success of future training programmes in the developing countries would depend on the availability of qualified teachers, the mission recommended that the Global Programme centres in Belgium and the Netherlands concentrate on enhancing the training of trainers by offering Master's and Ph.D. courses in population and development.

34. Although the course structure and curricula in all the training institutions had gone through a period of experimentation and change, the mission felt the need to develop a broad conceptual framework for population and development courses. The mission also stressed the importance of continued efforts to

sensitize policy makers and planners on the need to integrate population and development into the development process. Only through such sensitization could alumni be effective in applying their knowledge and skills in their work places.

35. The evaluation team found the three-month training programme in Moscow State University to be too short for trainees to acquire the requisite knowledge and technical skills to be able to integrate population and development into the planning processes of their countries. The mission, therefore, called for this training programme to be converted into a series of refresher courses on selected topics.

Evaluation of United Nations DTCD execution of UNFPA-funded projects

36. This evaluation covered selected projects in Latin America and the Caribbean, sub-Saharan Africa and Asia and the Pacific, and analyzed three main areas of United Nations DTCD's activities in the population field: demographic training and research; population and development and data collection and analysis. In addition, evaluation missions reviewed two interregional projects -- one to develop software for processing population data, the other to develop and apply an integrated database on women, population and development. As noted above, the Fund will prepare a report, summarizing the overall conclusions of the evaluation. Below is a summary of the main findings for each region.

Latin America and the Caribbean (Mission November - December 1990)

37. The evaluation mission reviewed a total of five projects: the two interregional projects mentioned above and three country projects, one of which dealt with demographic training and research in Honduras, another with population and development in Haiti, and a third with a census operation in Mexico.

38. The mission found that while the needs in demographic training and research were correctly identified in the project in Honduras and the project objectives were appropriate, the planned activities were overambitious both quantitatively and qualitatively. Not only was the time-frame to carry out the planned activities totally unrealistic, but the human resources foreseen and financial resources provided were inadequate to achieve the proposed objectives. By contrast, the administrative support provided by United Nations DTCD, including the recruitment of personnel, purchase and delivery of equipment, disbursement of finances, and reporting and coordination with other agencies and projects, was good.

39. The mission took note of the extremely difficult local circumstances in which the project on population and development had to operate in Haiti. It felt, however, that the project could have benefited from more intensive and on-the-spot monitoring by United Nations DTCD. It also observed that United Nations DTCD had not clearly defined the project's objectives or evaluated the project after the second year, even though UNFPA had strongly recommended doing so at the time it approved the project. The mission further found that there was a definite need to reorientate project activities and negotiate additional support.

40. The mission found United Nations DTCD technical and administrative support to the 1990 Mexico census operation to have been minimal. This was due, in the view of the mission, to many factors, chief among which were United Nations DTCD's late involvement with the census operation, the complexity of United Nations DTCD's procedures and the ready availability of high-quality local technical and managerial expertise, a factor that UNFPA had not taken into account in designating United Nations DTCD as co-executing agency along with the Government and UNFPA.

41. United Nations DTCD administrative and technical support to the interregional project to develop demographic software was deemed to have been good and opportune in Honduras, where a Spanish version of the software -- PC Edit -- had been developed. In Haiti and Mexico, however, the mission observed that local experts, even those involved in activities that may require such software, were not aware of its existence.

42. At the time of the mission, the project to develop an integrated database on women, population and development was being implemented only in Honduras. The mission found United Nations DTCD technical support to have been opportune and adequate. One notable project achievement was the inclusion of a special module on women in a permanent household survey. The project had experienced setbacks, but these were due by and large to external factors and not to problems with the project itself.

Sub-Saharan Africa (Mission February - March 1991)

43. The evaluation of United Nations DTCD-executed projects in sub-Saharan Africa covered two demographic training and research projects in Malawi and Mozambique, one population and development project in Niger, one census project in Cameroon and the interregional project on demographic software.

44. In the area of demographic training and research, the mission found that, with only one exception, United Nations DTCD selected well-qualified international project personnel. Although planned activities were too broad and too varied to permit a more rigorous implementation of the projects, the sum of the various initiatives undertaken undoubtedly promoted the overall objectives of raising awareness of population issues, particularly among students and academics, and improving national capacity in demographic analysis and research. At the same time, the mission felt that efforts to create awareness of population issues would be more effective if they focused more on substantive population and development issues and less on demographic techniques.

45. Commenting on the general weakness of United Nations DTCD's input in the formulation of the population and development project in Niger, the mission stressed the need to establish objectives that not only fit the activities being carried out, but also that could be measured quantitatively and qualitatively and attained within a realistic time-frame. The mission further emphasized the importance of selecting an appropriate expert as chief technical adviser, as this is a major factor for a project success.

46. Although the mission considered United Nations DTCD's involvement in the Cameroon census project to have been satisfactory as a whole, it questioned the advisability of adopting a universal, exhaustive enumeration approach rather than a combination of a long and a short questionnaire, since the latter would have cost much less and probably produced a higher quality of data. The mission further commented that United Nations DTCD had confined its role to administering the budget rather than organizing technical assistance. The mission also observed that delays in delivering equipment hindered the implementation of such key operations as cartography and data processing.

47. From its review of the performance in all four countries of the interregional project to develop demographic software, the mission concluded that many local experts were not aware of either the project or the software it had developed. Moreover, it noted that when software was available, it was seldom used. The mission called on United Nations DTCD to develop a better strategy to disseminate the software and related products. It also recommended that United Nations DTCD reconsider its current training strategies in this area, take special care in selecting suitable potential users of the software, and step up its efforts to ensure that such software was actually being used.

Asia and the Pacific (Mission September- October 1991)

48. The evaluation of UNDTCD execution of UNFPA-funded projects in Asia and the Pacific focused on five country projects and one interregional project. The country projects covered two demographic training and research projects in China, one population and development project in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and one census operation in Viet Nam. The interregional project dealt with the development of demographic software for processing population data.

49. The mission found UNDTCD's performance to have been adequate and satisfactory in China and Viet Nam, but that it had left much to be desired in the DPRK. In all three countries, however, the analysis of the various projects clearly demonstrated the inherent limitations of long-distance backstopping. These included, among others, the inability to provide technical backstopping when needed, delays in the disbursement of funds and overstretched workloads of backstopping officers in terms of both travel time and number of projects backstopped. In this connection, the mission expressed support for recent UNFPA initiatives to decentralize the provision of technical assistance through the establishment of subregional country programme technical support teams (see document DP/1992/30) and to increase technical advisory staff.

50. The mission noted that in the countries visited, there were different levels of political commitment to population issues, availability of local expertise and familiarity with operational procedures of international agencies. Yet, in the case of the DPRK project, the mission observed that the standard practices of UNDTCD in providing technical assistance were not flexible enough to accommodate the particular circumstances of the country. While the project design correctly identified training needs and the inputs required to establish a population centre, project implementation was hampered by such factors as the relative isolation of the DPRK, its unfamiliarity with the working of international agencies, and the effects of the United States embargo, all of which required special types of technical backstopping arrangements.

51. The mission was most impressed with the immense progress achieved in demographic training and research in China, especially since 1980 when the Government of China and UNFPA started collaborating in this field. The mission noted as the main factors for this development the strong commitment of the Chinese Government to population issues and the important contribution of UNDTCD professional and technical assistance. In view of the importance of demographic training and research in China, the magnitude of China's needs in this area and the large number and diversity of the institutes engaged in such activities, the mission called on UNDTCD to increase and diversify its allocation of professional and technical resources to this field in China and to continue to emphasize the need to enhance the technical demographic and computer skills among staff of all institutes.

52. The mission found the technical backstopping provided by UNDTCD to the census projects in Viet Nam to have been of high quality. Other factors accounting for the success of the census operation included the strong commitment of the Government, the generally high quality of national staff, the able coordinating role assumed by the UNFPA field office in Viet Nam as well as the additional technical inputs provided to the census by ESCAP and the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

53. The project on demographic software had supplied the countries visited with a variety of software options. It was found, however, that much of the software was not being used by the recipients and that many potential users had no hands-on training on how to use it. In China, for instance, the mission found that use of the software in many of the population institutes seemed quite low. Awareness of the range of softwares

available from UNDTCD was also not very high. As a result, some of the institutes were developing their own software, unaware of the software options available from UNDTCD.

WPRO regional programme (Mission January- February 1991)

54. The mission found the collaboration between UNFPA and WPRO in MCH/FP to have been beneficial not only to the programmes of both agencies but also to the various countries in the Western Pacific region. This collaboration had contributed, over the years, to a continuing improvement in the health of women and children in the region. However, the improvement had been uneven among countries, both in coverage and content of services. The mission therefore emphasized the need for both agencies to continue to further strengthen their long-standing collaboration.

55. The mission observed that during the period under review (1985-1989), there was hardly any time when the MCH/FP regional advisory team of WPRO was at full strength, primarily due to restrictions on recruitment imposed by the WHO quota system. This situation limited the effectiveness of the backstopping provided by the regional team, even though a number of WPRO regular technical staff and short-term consultants were utilized to fill the gaps. In addition to country-level visits being infrequent, individual team members often did little to inform country officials of their status as members of the special MCH/FP advisory team set up by UNFPA for the purpose of providing technical backstopping to countries. The mission felt that enhanced awareness of the existence of the team would likely promote further use of its services, in particular in providing broader national-level technical support, an area in which the team had made only a limited contribution.

56. The MCH/FP advisory team did make a notable contribution towards raising awareness throughout the region about Safe Motherhood by advocating and providing technical support for the adoption by the region's country representatives of the resolution on "National Maternal and Child Health Policies and Strategies" at the thirty-ninth session of the WHO Regional Committee for Western Pacific in September 1988. The regional team, even though at less than full capacity at the time, played an important role in creating awareness at the country level about the problems of Safe Motherhood by preparing background documentation for the session and generating support for and drafting the resolution.

57. A number of project proposals formulated with WPRO's assistance were found to have been inadequately designed: they either did not take the absorptive capacity of the concerned Governments adequately into account, had vague and unquantified objectives, did not conform to the project format established by UNFPA or did not provide proper justification for the UNFPA input. In some other instances, project objectives and strategies remained more or less identical through different phases, thus suggesting that past experience and achievements had not been taken sufficiently into account. The mission emphasized the need for WPRO project staff and outside consultants used to formulate projects to become more familiar with UNFPA guidelines for preparing project proposals.

58. Even though all country projects under review had placed a strong emphasis on training as a vehicle for shaping attitudes, enhancing skills and improving the quality of MCH/FP care, the mission expressed concern that none of the projects had built-in mechanisms to evaluate the effectiveness of such training activities, even in such countries as Papua New Guinea, where the effectiveness of the extensive training carried out over the years is known to have been limited at best.

59. The mission found that in a number of countries, both maternal and child health and family planning services were provided by the same staff at health centres. However, some countries had separate administrative structures for each type of services, and this impeded the integration of the two components and hindered the promotion and distribution of contraceptives. This was particularly the case in some South Pacific countries where overall use of MCH/FP services was found to be low.

Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) regional advisory services in MCH/FP (Mission July-August 1991)

60. Even though PAHO had been executing this project, including past phases, for nearly 10 years, PAHO project and national staff knew of it in only two of the six countries visited. Most viewed it not as a coherent effort of assistance at the regional level but rather as isolated activities organized by PAHO. The mission noted that this lack of awareness of the project had no doubt greatly reduced its intended impact, particularly as an effective instrument to provide guidance and advice in MCH/FP at the national level.

61. Strengthening the management of MCH/FP service delivery in Latin America and the Caribbean took place mainly through actions directed at improving implementation of country project activities as well as enhancing the managerial skills of professionals working in national health systems. The mission commended the high level of technical instruction of the interregional courses in management organized under the auspices of the regional project. However, for some of the countries with health systems that lacked the infrastructure needed to operate a more elaborate management system, the mission found the courses to be too sophisticated.

62. The mission considered the PAHO regional project to have played an important role in stimulating government interest in addressing the special health needs of adolescents. However, the mission found that, in the countries visited, there was great variation in the level of involvement of the regional project in problems related to adolescent reproductive health. One main constraint, which may have hindered Governments' acceptance of adolescent health programmes, was a dearth of research assessing the impact of specific interventions in reducing such critical demographic indicators as adolescent pregnancy rates and the prevalence of sexually transmitted diseases.

63. The mission, noting that family planning in the Latin American and Caribbean region was usually understood within the context of maternal and child health rather than as a demographic intervention, stressed the need to tailor family planning programmes to accommodate the socio-cultural diversity of the many population groups that inhabit the region. The mission also underscored the importance of epidemiological and demographic indicators to monitor the development of MCH/FP services. It commented that the lack of such data combined with a dearth of sound socio-cultural and behavioural data on the target populations for MCH/FP programmes had seriously undermined the success of family planning interventions.

WHO/South East Asia Regional Office (SEARO) regional advisory team on MCH/FP (Mission October-November 1991)

64. The mission noted with satisfaction that, on the whole, the collaboration between UNFPA and SEARO had significantly benefited the countries of the region by making use of the ample range of specialized technical capacities of SEARO and the global network of WHO to execute UNFPA-funded projects.

65. Overall, the regional team was found to have performed satisfactorily, undertaking activities consistent with the objectives of the project. Operational research and technical assistance activities were the main areas of action. SEARO-sponsored intercountry workshops were well appreciated and resulted in follow-up activities by participant countries. Furthermore, in spite of difficulties in recruiting staff for long-term posts, SEARO had adequately covered efforts to develop management information systems through use of short-term consultancies. However, the mission identified shortcomings in the overall management of the regional project as a major weakness. The mission also stressed the need to give more attention to such areas as training, transfer of technology, and adolescent health care.

66. On SEARO's effectiveness in executing UNFPA-funded country projects, the mission noted that various administrative procedures of SEARO did not meet UNFPA requirements, in particular those covering the purchase and supply of contraceptives and contraceptive equipment. The mission therefore recommended that SEARO review its procurement procedures in order to ensure the prompt and adequate supply of such items, since they are vital to the success of family planning programmes. The mission further noted that neither SEARO nor the responsible parties in UNFPA had given adequate attention to technical assistance in the area of project management and monitoring. It also found various instances of inadequate reporting on project progress and a general lack of adequate communication between executing and funding agencies.

B. Project evaluations

67. As already indicated, the number of project evaluations undertaken by the Fund has steadily increased over the past few years due to, among other things, the fact that most projects now have built-in evaluation components. In order to provide a representative sample of such activities, this report presents the findings of four major project evaluations -- one for each geographical region.

Mauritania

Project evaluated: Centre for Demography and Social Studies (MAU/87/P01)

Main project objectives: (a) to enhance knowledge on the interrelationships between population and development; (b) to promote understanding of the role of population at all levels of the Government; (c) to strengthen the technical capacities of the national staff in population-related matters; (d) to establish a database and documentation centre on population and development; and (e) to assist various ministries and collaborate with them in executing all population-related projects.

Timing of the evaluation: 17-31 August 1991

68. The evaluation mission observed that, while the Centre had carried out some studies on the linkage between population and other socio-economic development variables, participated in training in family planning for midwives and organized two seminars on population and development and a training course in data processing, a number of factors had hampered the full achievement of the project's objectives. First and foremost, was the Centre's lack of administrative autonomy. Indeed, neither the chief technical adviser of the project nor the head of the Centre had the authority to dispose of project staff or of its material and financial resources. A second factor was the Centre's active participation in the 1988 population census, which led it to cancel or postpone most of its own activities at the time. Furthermore, at no time during the entire duration of the project did the Centre play its intended leading role in population issues, nor was it involved in formulating development plans. Finally, in April 1991, with the creation by the Government of the

Directorate of Human Resources, the Centre's responsibilities were distributed between this new unit and the National Statistics Office, of which the Centre, renamed the Department of Demographic Statistics and Social Studies, became a part. As of the time of the mission, the Centre had not been officially dissolved.

69. The evaluation mission recommended that the Centre should be dissolved by official act and its assets distributed between the Department of Demographic Statistics and Social Studies and the Directorate of Human Resources. Furthermore, the mission suggested that UNFPA should acknowledge the Department and the Directorate as two different recipients in the field of population. UNFPA was accordingly advised to accelerate the approval of two new projects -- one on "census analysis" with the National Statistics Office; and the other on population policy with the Directorate of Human Resources.

India

Project evaluated: Centres of Excellence for training in sterilization and microsurgical recanalization (IND/88/P01)

Main project objectives: Noted in paragraph 70

Timing of the evaluation: 31 March 1991

70. The evaluation mission found that all project objectives for Phase I have been met: four regional Centres of Excellence for training in sterilization and recanalization had been established as planned in Bombay, Calcutta, New Delhi and Madras; service delivery standards for male and female sterilization and recanalization had been developed, endorsed by the Government of India, printed and distributed; and curricula for training in sterilization and recanalization had been developed. As a result, sterilization and microsurgical recanalization services at the four regional centres had been improved, and refresher training in male and female sterilization for state- and district-level trainers was being conducted routinely using the new service standards and training curricula.

71. In spite of these achievements, the mission noted that the training had not produced optimal results due to the inappropriate selection of some trainees and the limited number of participants from other states. Moreover, the follow-up, evaluation and monitoring of the trainees who had completed the course had not been as thorough or systematic as it should have been, primarily due to limited staff to do so. In addition, the project incurred substantial cost overruns. This was due to unrealistically low cost estimates, significant additions to the original list of equipment and training materials, and increases in prices between the time the budget was prepared to the actual time of procurement several years later.

72. The mission stressed that second-generation state-level trainers would have to be oriented to what was expected of them after their training. To this end, training responsibilities must be well explained and understood during the selection of trainees, and training curricula must be simplified.

Mexico

Project evaluated: Strengthening the national MCH/FP programme (MEX/87/PO3)

Main project objectives: (a) to increase the coverage of MCH/FP services to small rural communities, and to adolescents in 10 urban centres; (b) to reduce the fertility rate and decrease the incidence of unwanted

pregnancies; (c) to design programmes on family planning and sex education for the national education system, and to develop strategies to encourage the male population to participate in family planning programmes; (d) to improve the knowledge and skills of 80 per cent of the professionals engaging in MCH/FP services and 100 per cent of the managerial personnel of the Ministry of Health at both state and federal levels, especially in the area of programming and evaluation as part of the decentralization efforts of the Ministry of Health.

Timing of evaluation: 11 July - 14 August 1990

73. The mission found that overall the project had been successfully implemented. An important output had been the development of human resources in family planning service delivery, which was crucial for the education aspect of the project. In the mission's opinion, one of the main reasons for the success of the project had been the coherent and continuous work by the Ministry of Health, despite several changes in project directors.

74. The mission found it difficult, if not impossible, to determine how the project had contributed to the reduction of fertility rates during the period under review. Nevertheless, it did determine that the project contributed substantially to the increase in the coverage of family planning services.

75. In spite of these achievements, the project fell short of attaining some of its other objectives, particularly those related to reducing fertility rates among adolescents and increasing the coverage of family planning services among rural inhabitants. The mission found that only a small percentage of all out-patient visits by adolescents were related to family planning. Moreover, the project had failed to reach some of the cities in the interior with its activities as well as many rural areas. The mission also observed that in spite of the resources allocated to increase men's participation in the family planning programme, coverage among men continued to be low. The mission recommended therefore that alternative strategies be explored in this area.

76. The mission recommended that project objectives be reviewed and reformulated since they were found to be too numerous, overly ambitious, and given available resources, impossible to meet. The mission also urged that a database on NGOs be established, together with a description of the services provided by each in order to avoid duplication of tasks in certain areas and undercoverage in others. The mission stressed the need to work with NGOs in addition to government institutions, particularly in view of the formers' effectiveness and low operating costs. The evaluation results were used in planning the present UNFPA support to the Ministry of Health.

Sudan

Project evaluated: Improving the health of mothers and children through MCH/FP

Main project objectives: Noted in paragraph 77

Timing of the evaluation: 30 August - 21 September 1991

77. The project sought to establish six regional MCH/FP centres to upgrade training facilities in 23 midwifery schools, to develop a supervisory system for MCH/FP service delivery at the district level in 16 districts, to improve the national MCH/FP information system and to complete a community-based study on the maternal mortality rate.

78. Among the project outputs, the mission noted that 19 midwifery schools had been equipped and that a research proposal on maternal mortality, although still weak in its design and research methodology, had been submitted to WHO. In November 1989, a national seminar was organized to familiarize maternal health staff with the basic principles of the risk approach (i.e., identifying women at highest risk during pregnancy). This seminar provided useful information regarding existing problems in the national health system in this important area.

79. In assessing the overall performance of the project, the evaluation mission found that the project had failed to meet its immediate objectives of establishing six MCH/FP centres and developing effective supervisory and evaluation systems. The reasons for the less than optimal performance included lack of qualified personnel and reliable technical support, poor project management and lack of coordination and collaboration between project management and the MCH Directorate. There were also problems with the timely release of project funds and with the auditing of project expenditures at the Omdurman Maternity Hospital, which was to have been conducted by WHO's Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office (EMRO) but was not.

80. The evaluation made specific recommendations to address some of these issues, including the strengthening of the central MCH Directorate through the addition of staff and the clarification of job descriptions, as well as the integration of the project with other national programmes such as that dealing with nutrition, and the provision of additional technical support in the form of advisers and consultants.

C. Programme Review and Strategy Development (PRSD)

81. A total of 47 PRSD exercises were undertaken during the period under review. In view of the large number of missions carried out and the limited space available, this report will briefly review the evaluation findings of one PRSD per region. The missions summarized below were selected because they met one basic criteria: the PRSD exercise had a distinct and clear evaluation component. Three of the four programmes reviewed were those of priority countries for UNFPA assistance.

Senegal

Timing: 25 February - 29 March 1991

82. The mission observed that despite considerable economic hardship Senegal had made substantial advances in the population field in the last four years. Whereas a 1985 needs assessment mission had noted the absence of a coordinated and concerted national population policy, efforts initiated during the last decade had culminated in 1988 in the adoption by the Government of an official population policy together with a national population programme, both of which aimed, among other things, at reducing maternal and infant mortality, promoting birth-spacing/family planning and reducing population growth. The policy provided a solid legal basis for the planning and implementation of population activities in the country. In 1990, the Government formulated the National Family Planning Programme, which was followed the next year by the development of the First Programme on Priority Actions and Investment in Population.

83. The mission found that the UNFPA-funded country programme had made a substantial contribution to this process through two projects -- one aimed at improving the knowledge of demographic phenomena, the other at promoting the integration of population factors into the formulation of a spatial population distribution policy. The mission noted, however, that the implementation of both projects suffered because of communication problems between the national and regional levels, as well as a concentration of resources

in the capital city. There were also problems with coordination between the different departments and ministries involved in the formulation and implementation of the population policy.

84. With respect to demographic data collection, UNFPA support had contributed to the analysis of the 1986 demographic and health survey and the 1988 census, the improvement of the civil registration system, and in the process had made available quality data that were being used for planning purposes. Nonetheless, the mission identified several major shortcomings in this area, including the absence of a concerted and definite strategy on data collection, which resulted in, among other things, duplication of effort and lack of coordination; the absence of a computerized data bank; and inadequate programming of available resources for data collection.

85. Even though UNFPA's contribution in the MCH/FP sector was limited in terms of its geographical coverage, the mission concluded that it had clearly helped the Government in its strategy to integrate MCH and family planning services in health centres. It also had helped identify important factors for the sustainability and success of future MCH/FP projects and programmes in Senegal. In spite of the progress achieved to date, overall the mission observed that the MCH/FP situation was still characterized by high maternal and infant mortality, poor quality of care, limited accessibility of services, low contraceptive usage, and inadequate supervision and information systems.

86. Over the past few years, the Government's attitude towards population IEC had evolved from one of cautious and timid participation to that of active leadership, culminating in the formulation and adoption of a population policy. The mission noted that IEC components had been appropriately integrated into various programmes, including literacy programmes, programmes aimed at enhancing the status of women, programmes addressing the special needs of youth and adolescents, and family planning programmes. While on balance the results of such activities had been satisfactory and IEC had been recognized as a key component in efforts to achieve population policy objectives, the effectiveness of IEC activities had suffered because of inadequate coordination, lack of appropriate research and haphazard production and dissemination of IEC materials.

87. There was not, according to the mission, an elaborate and explicit framework for activities in the area of women, population and development. Nevertheless, important actions had been undertaken in this sector by a number of government ministries, bilateral and multilateral agencies and NGOs. The mission found that UNFPA support in particular had demonstrated the powerful incentive income-generating activities had produced to get women to participate in various project/programme activities. However, the most notable achievement had been the development of the National Programme on Maternal Mortality, in which maternal health was addressed in a global perspective encompassing health, community, economic, cultural and environmental concerns. The programme provided a coherent global framework for women-related activities, the lack of which in the past had led the various actors in the field to develop their own projects and programmes without any type of coordination.

88. The mission made a number of recommendations that were taken into account in the formulation of the country programme for Senegal, which is being presented to the Council at this session. These recommendations called, among other things, for the refinement of the population policy, the continuation of the strategy to integrate MCH and family planning, the strengthening of coordination mechanisms, the enhanced sensitization of political leaders and the public alike to population issues, the strengthening of training in all areas of the programme, the rationalization of data collection and the further integration of women into the development process.

Tunisia

Timing: 9 April - 1 May 1990

89. The country programme reviewed in connection with this PRSD mission covered the period 1987-1991. The programme sought to strengthen the integration of family planning with other health services, to diversify IEC activities, to strengthen research on the interrelationship between population variables and other socio-economic factors and, finally, to promote education activities for women, particularly in rural areas.

90. The mission noted that as a whole the Tunisia population policy was consistent with the country's objectives for socio-economic development and that both the population policy and the family planning programme enjoyed strong political support at the highest levels. While past development plans viewed population variables as exogenous to the development process, the seventh development plan covering the period 1992-1996 considered population factors as an integral part of the development process.

91. Encouraging results were noted in the integration of family planning with other health services, particularly in the rural areas which were to receive priority attention in accordance with the government policy on decentralization. The success of such integration in the zones covered by UNFPA assistance led the Government to expand the integration strategy to the whole country. The mission found that weak management of health services represented the single most critical challenge to the government objective of doubling the number of contraceptive acceptors by the year 2000. Furthermore, trained health staff were scarce, and coordination among the various government units involved in the delivery of family planning service had sometimes been problematic.

92. The mission observed that activities in the IEC sector had succeeded in, among other things, developing a population education programme for agriculture extension workers, preparing guidelines for the introduction of population education in primary schools, as well as developing population themes to be integrated in disciplines such as geography and history in secondary schools. A population education programme for teachers had also been developed. According to the mission, however, it was too early to assess the impact of these actions.

93. The mission found the information and communication strategy for population and family planning to be balanced, combining activities in various sectors, including the media, organized labour, the health sector and the private sector, among others. In this connection, the mission stressed the need to gain better knowledge of target groups in order to make media campaigns more effective. It also suggested that the strategies used to create awareness in the organized labour sector should be intensified.

94. In the women, population and development sector, the mission took note of the many studies conducted on the family, on women's occupations and on efforts to integrate women into the development process. In the context of activities to integrate population education into training programmes for young women in rural areas, a training module was developed integrating components dealing with such issues as education, population, economics, hygiene, nutrition, family welfare, and maternal and child health. The mission found this strategy to be appropriate and recommended that it be continued.

95. The mission noted the Government's concerns with achieving a balance between population growth and economic development. To this end, several studies had been conducted on the interrelationship between population factors and various other socio-economic development variables, including the impact of the level

of education on population and fertility rates, the correlation between labour participation rates and contraceptive prevalence rates and so forth. At the same time, the mission observed that the research results of demographic and socio-economic studies conducted in the past had not always been utilized for policy formulation or programme implementation. The establishment of a computerized database now under way was seen by the mission as one way to address this issue.

96. While the mission recommended continued UNFPA support in the above-mentioned sectors, it emphasized as priority areas the further integration of family planning services with other health services, the training of personnel, the introduction of new contraceptive methods, the strengthening of IEC activities, the further development and refinement of the national population policy, the further integration of population factors into development planning, the continuation of the strategy in the area of women, population and development, and the strengthening of operational research.

Viet Nam

Timing: 12 November - 14 December 1990

97. The country programme reviewed in connection with this PRSD covered the period 1988-1991. The programme focused on reducing fertility, heightening the involvement of local authorities in the coordination and supervision of population activities, developing a national strategy of IEC in support of family planning activities, and improving the logistics system for distributing contraceptives.

98. The PRSD mission documented that in October 1988 the Council of Ministers issued the Decree on Population and Family Planning Policies, formalizing an increase in the age of mothers at first birth, birth-spacing of three-to-five years, and a family norm of one to two children with exceptions made for special groups. In addition, a National Health Law passed by the National Assembly in June 1989 strongly stressed the fact that individuals must be free to choose the family planning method they wish.

99. The results achieved to date were reported to have been impressive: the small family norm was increasingly widespread in the country, close to 40 per cent of women in reproductive ages were using modern contraceptives; the national leadership continued to strongly support efforts to reduce population growth; and fertility was declining. The mission further noted that the Government had also made the first move towards providing different forms of service delivery by approving the establishment of the first national population NGO, supported by the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF). The major constraint appeared to be the lack of availability of a wide variety of modern contraceptives, the IUD being by far the preferred method.

100. Another major achievement of the programme had been the conduct of the 1989 population census, which in terms of the quality and timeliness of the results was thought to be among the best censuses ever funded by UNFPA. The mission noted that quality data on population size, composition and distribution were now available, as was information on fertility levels and family planning practices.

101. In the IEC sector, the mission found that programme success was more limited. The plan to develop a national IEC strategy never materialized. The lack of such a strategy had hampered the development of coherent IEC activities. With regard to women, population and development, the mission concluded that while access to family planning services had most likely contributed to the improvement of the health of

women, their role and status had not necessarily been enhanced in the absence of economic betterment. Women still required their husbands' permission in order to use contraception.

102. According to the mission, the most serious constraints adversely affecting the programme were: poor telecommunications and mail delivery systems; fluctuating exchange rates of the local currency; government financial limitations; the lack of an adequate database pending publication of the 1989 census data; the sheer number of projects within the programme, as well as the limitations of both planning and managerial skills in the country. Furthermore, in Viet Nam, unlike most other developing countries, UNFPA had been the only donor agency supporting population activities. For more than 10 years, the economic boycott of Viet Nam had succeeded in blocking bilateral aid and loans from international agencies such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

103. The strategies proposed by the PRSD mission take into account the above findings. They call, among other things, for the next country programme to be developed as a coherent entity, built on the 1988-1991 programme and focusing on a few key sectors. The strategies also emphasize the need for improved coordination of population-related activities. The findings and recommendations of the PRSD mission have been taken into account in the formulation of the Fund's proposed programme of assistance to Viet Nam (1992-1995) which is being submitted to the Governing Council at this session.

Bolivia

Timing: 5 May - 1 June 1990

104. Until the development of the first country programme, which was submitted to the Governing Council at its thirty-eighth session (1991), UNFPA assistance to Bolivia focused on individual projects in the major traditional areas of data collection, MCH/FP, population and development, education and communication, and women, population and development. With regard to the data collection sector, the mission observed that UNFPA had had a major presence in the country in terms of technical and financial support for censuses, civil registration and the 1988 Population and Housing Survey. While recognizing that UNFPA cooperation had from time to time strengthened the institutional and technical capability of the National Statistical Institute, the mission stressed the need to step up this cooperation in the short and medium term. The areas most in need of support, according to the mission, were demographic analysis, the organization and operation of a population data bank, and the development of human resources capable of dealing with population issues.

105. The mission concluded that UNFPA assistance had helped establish the methodological, institutional and operational foundation needed to formulate national and regional population policies and integrate them into socio-economic development strategies and plans. However, owing to the extremely sensitive nature of population issues in Bolivia, the advances made in research and in the preparation of publication and policy guidelines had failed to make headway in efforts to formulate and implement population policies as well as to incorporate such policies into development planning, even after more than a decade of assistance.

106. UNFPA assistance in the MCH/FP sector had contributed, according to the mission, to the elaboration of Bolivia's National Child Survival and Development and Maternal Health Plan, one of the major achievements of UNFPA-supported MCH/FP activities. It had also helped to improve the monitoring and evaluation of the MCH/FP programme. The mission concluded that overall the successive phases of the MCH/FP activities had been successfully implemented in good and close cooperation with the relevant

authorities. Such activities constituted, in the mission's opinion, one of the main forms of support for the National Mother and Child Health Programme in Bolivia.

107. The mission noted that UNFPA assistance to the development of population education and communication had been confined to informal education activities as part of MCH/FP activities, in which context they had been a relatively minor component. Moreover, the mission found the institutional arrangements of the Ministry of Social Welfare and Public Health in the social communication/education field generally to be weak, and this had had direct repercussions on the potential of MCH/FP activities as vehicles for educating the population of the areas it covers. The mission noted the ongoing efforts by WHO/PAHO to strengthen the capacity of the Ministry in this respect.

108. In the area of women, population and development, the mission observed that a number of research studies and training and coordination activities had been carried out with the purpose of bringing about more widespread attention to women's problems and establishing a systematic theoretical and methodological framework for activities to address such problems. However, the mission noted that many of these efforts have not actually been implemented or translated into actions to formulate policies or specific guidelines at the governmental level, even though such efforts had given rise to the establishment of a ministry to coordinate women's activities.

109. The mission recommended a total of nine strategic approaches as a reference framework for developing a comprehensive population programme in Bolivia. They included the formulation of strategies to integrate population factors into development planning, support to MCH/FP and population education programmes with emphasis on improving the quality, quantity and accessibility of services; and the creation of greater awareness of the interrelationship between population and development. The other areas specifically targeted by the mission were training, community participation, coordination and socio-demographic research.